

Champaign Public Library Director's Report | January 2026

New & Noteworthy



Young Entrepreneur Program Returns Next Month

Our Young Entrepreneur Program will resume on February 9. During the course of the program, area high school students will receive coaching and advice on how to turn their ideas into viable businesses. The program will culminate in May at the Pitch Competition where students will present their business idea for a chance to win \$5,000 in seed money to grow their business.



Community Job Fair

Looking for a job? We can help.

- 20 area employment resources
- Enter for a chance to win a Chromebook!

Tuesday
February 17
5:30–7:30 pm

Part of the Get that Job! series
champaign.org/career

**Virtual Visit with
R.L. Stine**
Still Afraid of the Dark:
An Evening with R.L. Stine

Tuesday
Feb 24
7 pm

Sign up! champaign.org/events

Upcoming Community Job Fair

The library will host another job fair on Tuesday, February 17. Attendees will have the opportunity to connect with more than twenty local career and employment services. Participating organizations will include the University of Illinois and the City of Champaign.

Virtual Visit With Renowned Author

On February 24, Illinois Libraries Present will host children's author R.L. Stine for a virtual visit to discuss his illustrious and still-expanding body of work including his popular Goosebumps and Fear Street series.

Program Highlights

Growing Interest at Unbooked and Unbooked Kids

Each week, customers can spend their Friday night at Unbooked, Unbooked Kids, or both. At Unbooked, rotating activities include bingo, trivia, puzzles, and live music. At Unbooked Kids, families can enjoy a variety of games and activities each week.



Dinovember Draws a Big Crowd

On November 8, **358 community members** joined us to celebrate all things dinosaur at our Dinovember Party. Activities included dino-themed puzzles and games for all ages.

Tuesdays at Ten Travels the World

On January 6, biologists and world travelers Michael Jeffords and Susan Post began a four-part lecture series that took attendees on a worldwide journey exploring everything from snow leopards, giant katydids, and Bengal tigers.

Open Mic Night

Writers who attended January's Open Mic Night had the chance to share their poetry, spoken word, and flash fiction with fellow writers in the community.



Spring Reading Challenge is Underway

Our spring reading challenge themed Discover New Stories! commenced on January 1 and will run through April 30. Readers can log their reading in the Beanstack app to win prize books and more.



Douglass Branch



Growing Use of Makerspace

In December, 29 participants utilized the Makerspace over the course of two sessions.

Table Talk Book Club

At January's Table Talk session, 11 attendees gathered to discuss the book *The Many Lives of Mama Love* by Lara Love Hardin.

Mother Goose on the Loose Visit

Mother Goose visited the Douglass Branch to share songs and stories with 29 children at the end of December.

Book Giveaways

Staff gave out 25 children's books in the month of December to add to their growing home libraries.

Pajama Storytimes

Pajama Storytime is a new addition at the Douglass Branch that occurs on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. The series is gaining interest as more families learn about this fun version of storytime.

Customer Comments

Braving the Cold for 3D Dragons

A customer came in to pick up two 3D printed articulated dragons for her sons on this day and shared, "I would have come over the weekend, but obviously the weather had other plans. My boys kept trying to get me to go out in the blizzard to pick up these dang dragons!"

Studio Tools Help Start a Business

Library staff assisted a customer wanting to start his own clothing company by showing him how to make and press his first t-shirt design with iron-on vinyl in the Studio. The customer was thrilled to see his first design come to life and commended staff on their teaching abilities.

Good Vibes Down in the Studio

A customer brought his kids down to the Studio and before leaving shared the following sentiment with staff, "This is a really great thing you guys are doing here. Really great vibes down here. We'll for sure be back!"

The Lasting Impact of Stories

After attending a Storytime session, a parent stopped by the Children's desk to get some book recommendations. A few days later, the parent returned and shared that the books were a big hit with her son. She shared that they love attending the Saturday Storytimes whenever they can and that her son has started to repeat specific phrases from the stories.

Ringing in the New Year at the Library

A staff member was assisting a customer at the public computers when another customer approached and said, "I just have to tell you how everyone loves the library. It's New Year's Eve, the library parking lot is full, people have chosen to come here, again look at how loved this library is."

The Makerspace at Douglass Branch

Overview | July 2025–December 2025

Makerspace Drop-ins & Programming

From July through December, **189 community members** utilized the Saturday Drop-ins. Additionally, Saturday gaming sessions remain a major draw for local youth with 15–20 kids attending each week.

Introductory Series for Makerspace Tools

Attendance and interest are growing for the Intro to Series each month. From July through December, **23 community members** participated in introductory sessions related to sewing, Cricut machines, and our Glowforge machines.

Equipment Usage: Sewing, 3D Printing, and Cricut Machines

Staff continue to see steady usage on the sewing machines, with patrons utilizing the machines for a variety of personal and creative projects. The Cricut remains a popular tool, with ongoing demand from patrons working on crafting, personalization, and design projects. Interest in 3D printing continues to grow steadily and staff are seeing a higher demand for 3D printing services.



The Studio at the Library

Overview | July 2025–December 2025

Book-A-Librarian Appointments

From July to December, library staff met individually with **63 community members** people how to use new technology including the Glowforge laser cutter, Cricut machines, recording booths, sewing machines, and 3D printers.

New Equipment & Software

A sublimation printer was purchased for The Studio which will fulfill frequent customer requests for personalized items – including photographs and complex logos on mugs, which we were unable to accommodate before with existing equipment. Auto Press will complement existing heat press tools, enhancing the overall experience, and for anyone with physical disabilities preventing them from putting pressure on a heatpress or lifting the hand-held heat presses, the autopress handles that on its own. Affinity, a new software added to Studio laptops, will be offered as an alternative to Adobe Illustrator/Photoshop and Inkscape for a more user-friendly experience.

Expaning Tech Programs

A new workshop titled “Digitizing Physical Media” workshop was implemented that demonstrates how to create digital copies and principles of how best to scan different kinds of media.

Crafting Series

In July, a informal craft series was added down in The Studio. The series features seasonal themes and activities for all ages and encourages creativity and community participation

Programming in The Studio

From July through December, **33 programs** were offered in The Studio with **508 community members** in attendance for regular programming including Crafty Adults, Writer's Workshop, Studio Workshops, and our Getting Started with Tech series.

